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# Congo News Letter

MARCH 1956

Archives

# CONGO NEWS LETTER

Vol. XLVIII March 1956 No. 1

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# GOD OF ETERNITY

"EVEN FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, THOU ART GOD."
Psalm 90 : 2b

*God of eternity !*
*God of today !*
*Thou knowest tomorrow*
*As yesterday.*
*Thou didst create in Godly image man*
*Thou holdest us surely in Thy Father-hand.*
*Give us courage to follow Thee*
*In times of gladness or adversity.*
*Give us wisdom to know Thy will*
*Tho' it leads through green pastures or up Calvary's hill.*
*Give us breath and tongues to sing*
*Of Thee and Thy Son of kings — the King !*
*Give us hands and feet for Thee*
*To build for today and for eternity.*

— JANET BOONE

# *YESTERDAY, TODAY, and FOREVER*

VIRGINIA NICKERSON

YESU Klisto umosi zono ye bwabu ye mvu ka mvu; *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today, and forever;* to English and Kikongo speaking Christians, it is a precious realization. But when Henry Richards first tried to share this knowledge with the people of Banza Manteke in 1879, it took him three months to learn the word for "yesterday". And an even greater problem than vocabulary was what he should teach them.

Where should he begin? With God as the Creator of the world? They already believed that, or at least that there was a great creator who had made all things; but they thought of him as indifferent and distant, not worthy of praise or worship. The gods they trusted for protection from sickness and disaster were symbolized by little image or fetishes, and even they could not be expected to bring direct blessings. They believed, too, in spirits and witchcraft, to which they attributed all evils and misfortunes.

It wasn't much to build on, so Mr. Richards decided to begin at the beginning with the Bible account of the creation and the fall. He tried to show the people that God is not only a great, all-powerful Creator, but also a kind and loving Father; he told them that sickness and death and other calamities are not caused by witches or spirits but by sin and ignorance. But it was as if they were deaf. After four years of teaching, not one person had expressed a desire to forsake his "gods" of wood for a heavenly Father, and no one seemed even to consider himself a sinner.

Then Mr. Richards sought advice from others who were missionaries in other fields and with more experience than his own. What was he doing that was wrong? What was he not doing that he should do? Why were not people being saved? Their advice was to teach the people the law, for that alone could convince them of sin and of their need of a Saviour. So on reaching Banza Manteke again, the first thing he did was to translate the Ten Commandments. But though the people said that these teachings were good, they claimed that they had always kept them. Even the plainest and most personal applications of the decalogue made no apparent impression, and there was no evidence of any change.

In his discouragement, Mr. Richards began to search for the answer to his problem in the Bible, and he found it in the great commission that had sent him to Africa. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel..." Not the law nor the prophets, not the creation story nor escatology, and his definition of the gospel he took from I Cor. 15:3, 4 — "How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day..." Before he could preach Jesus crucified, he had to first teach the people who Jesus was, and so taking Luke's gospel, he translated ten or twelve verses a day, and then taught them.

Almost immediately the people became interested, and more and more came each day to hear his message. Then in Luke 6:30 he found the most difficult verse he had ever had to translate, not because it was hard to understand, but because it was so easily understood. "Give to every man that asketh of thee..." The people of Banza Manteke had been slow and unwilling to accept what he had been trying to teach them for six years, but he knew they would be quick to accept this. Yet he did not feel that he could omit the verse, nor did he feel that he could interpret it other than literally. So it was with great apprehension that he read the verse to the people, explaining that this was a very high standard, but that he meant to live what he preached. His apprehensions were justified when after he had finished teaching, the people began to come to ask him for this possession and that. Whatever they asked for he gave them, wondering just how far this thing would go, as his table, his chair, his lamp, and even his wash basin were taken.

But when the chief heard this, he called the people together and told them to return the articles that they had taken from the white man. And when they brought them back, the "borrowers" stayed to hear more of this Jesus who taught such strange things. The climax was reached as Mr. Richards came to the account of the crucifixion. The impression it made was very deep, and shortly after that the first Congolese Christian was born, the result of one man's willingness to teach the whole word of God and seven years of weariness, waiting, and working.

There was persecution at first, and the Christians were few,

but as their countrymen saw the changes that were wrought in the lives of the new Christians and heard the word of God from their lips, more and more were won to Christ. And each one who became a Christian brought his fetishes and images to be burned. For the first time in Congo, huge piles of fetishes and images were collected and burned. Mr. Richards and the first believers lit the fires which sometimes burned all day and all night. There were always crowds of people who came in fear to watch, because they thought that the spirits of the dead would bring some calamity upon the village because of this action. But when nothing happened, many of them were willing to accept the God of love as their own Saviour, too, and within the year hundreds professed Christ.

With good reason, this is called the Pentecost on the Congo. The work that was begun at Banza Manteke in 1879 has continued to grow, giving us a strong church and upstanding second and third generation Christians, who have also had a personal experience with Christ. The work has also continued to spread, from person to person, from village to village, from district to district. Today it is at Vanga that the large numbers are being won to Christ and His church, and the work is expanding rapidly in every direction. Tomorrow we are confident that it will be at Boko, our newest station, where as yet the work is hard and the people are unresponsive. And the day after tomorrow, we pray for a Pentecost at the stations that are still unestablished, the ones that will be part of our Congo Advance Program, reaching tribes and villages as yet untouched.

We know it can be, for we have the same ingredients that brought about the first revival in Congo — the word of God, the missionaries to preach it, and the abiding presence of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

# *WHICH WAY, LEOPOLDVILLE?*

PHYLLIS BENNER

YESTERDAY Léopoldville was a village. Yesterday it belonged to the Bateke and Bakongo tribes, people closely related and used to cooperating over a long period of time. Yesterday they lived easily and slowly on the banks of the Congo River. The people were fishermen and traders. The tempo was unhurried. Yesterday the tribe was the important thing. The elders ruled by the time honored laws of their people. Nothing new, nothing unusual, nothing different. Yesterday —

Today Léopoldville is a city. Today it belongs to all of the people of Congo — the Baluba, the Bangala, people from all along the Congo River and its tributaries. They come from Angola, from Stanleyville, from Lake Léopold II, from the Kwango, as well as from the old original Bakongo tribes. Today the city has spread up and down the river and inland into its new suburbs. And it is still expanding rapidly to try to house its 350,000 people. Even with this rapid expansion the old centers have lost none of their density of population (46,000 per square mile).

Today its people are office workers, ship yard and cotton mill laborers. They are clerks in banks and stores and post offices. They are administrative workers for the government; they own and run stores and trucking companies; they run the trains; they build and repair the roads; they run busses; they work at the airport.

Today money is the most important thing; money and what it can buy. The whole program of the home and community is built around the money-making schedule. Laws, where they have come with the people, are many and vary greatly. The elders are in the villages. Everything new is good, all the old is to be thrown away. New clothes, new languages, new friends, new wives and husbands, new gadgets, new food, new knowledge. Anything and everything new. Today —

Many of the people have bridged this gap of yesterday and today in one week or month. They jump from the old tried village life to the hectic rushing new of the city. All perspectives change. All ways of acting and thinking are different. Whistles and bells are the clock, not the sun. No longer garden work and hunting,

but commerce and industry. The rush is on. And tomorrow?

The one group of people who come anywhere near to keeping their heads and sane judgements are the Christians.

Yesterday Jesus and his church came with a message of love, with God the Father of all, and Jesus his son sent to live this love among men and save them. With this love came the conviction of Christian family — in each individual unit and around the world. Healing and learning were part of the good news.

To yesterday the love of God meant salvation from the evil power of the spirit world. It meant death to some of the old rigid rules, and change for others. Healing released men from the bondage of disease, and life automatically moved faster because bodies were healthier. Learning opened up new ways of living and doing. Isolated tribes and families were confronted with the Christian imperative of one family and people, under God.

Today the message is even more needed in this city of Léopoldville, so lately a village itself, and so full of people lately from villages. As a substitute for the rules (good or bad) left behind, the rules dictated by the God of love and of uprightness are even more imperative. Jesus is a necessary member of each family, a living example of what God wishes for his people. The Christian church must be even more untiring in its witnessing of the fatherhood of God, for fathers and mothers have been left behind in the villages, and their rules and ways of doing things have been abandoned.

Where so many people have come together in what is literally a struggle to build a new life, healing and learning are a must. New diseases and old ones, epidemics, and undernourishment when father and mother no longer have gardens and know not how or what to buy for good health, or when the money goes for new and exciting kinds of alcohol. Ignorance is a terrible thing when you are a few, it is even worse when you are many. Rumors, competition for work, social contacts, news from the rest of the world — you have to know something to get along.

The old isolation and animosity of the tribes can no longer exist. The Christian idea of one people under God is the only way to build on the many peoples and variations of background now present in Léopoldville. They have to live together, for they are together in physical surroundings. There is only one way to

live together in peace and harmony and mutual respect, and that is as brothers under the Fatherhood of God.

And tomorrow?

Tomorrow depends upon the witness of yesterday and today. It depends on how well Jesus and his message were and are being brought to the city of Léopoldville. But this we know — tomorrow the message of our God of love, and Jesus his son will be the same salvation that it has been in the past, and is today.

## *MEDICAL WORK THEN....and NOW!*

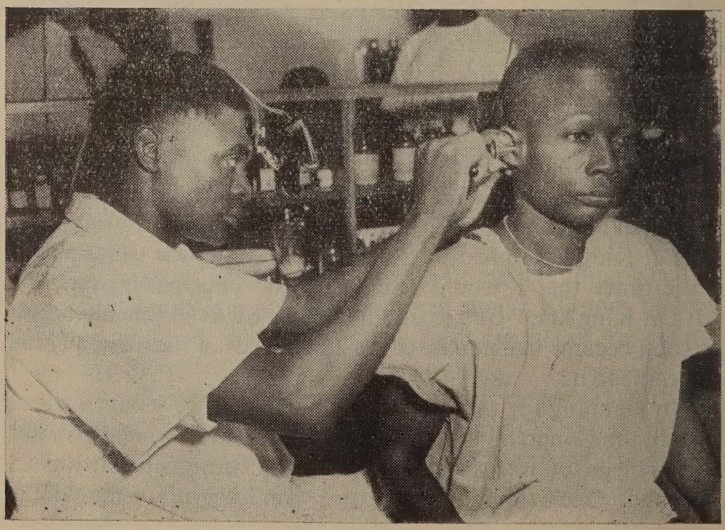
JEANNETTE TUTTLE

YEARS ago from the back porch of her home at Sona Bata Mrs. Frederickson ministered to the sick, the poor and the hungry dispensing medicines where needed, dressing wounds, and giving forth the Bread of Life which is most important of all. It would be irrelevent to say that this open porch was inadequate for the needs, and so it was a happy day when a wood framed building with a tin roof, about the size of a four bed ward in an average American hospital, was completed and she was able to move the medicines and the dressings into more spacious quarters.

It was in this building that medical work was being done in 1928. On an adjoining hill-top there was also a fine new hospital under construction, a part of which was already complete. It had a capacity of 50 beds with an operating room suite, laboratory, dispensary for out-patients, a large screened room for the dressing of tropical ulcers, etc. Even many missionaries, we are told, felt that Dr. King's plan for the Sona Bata hospital was so far ahead of the times that it would be impractical. Time has proven how well Dr. King knew Congo and its people for even this big building soon became inadequate to meet the needs of the many people who came to it.

In planning for the present and in dreaming what medical work in the Congo might be like 25 years from now, one also has the privilege of retrospect and of remembering what it was 25 years ago. One's thoughts often turn with longing for the "horse

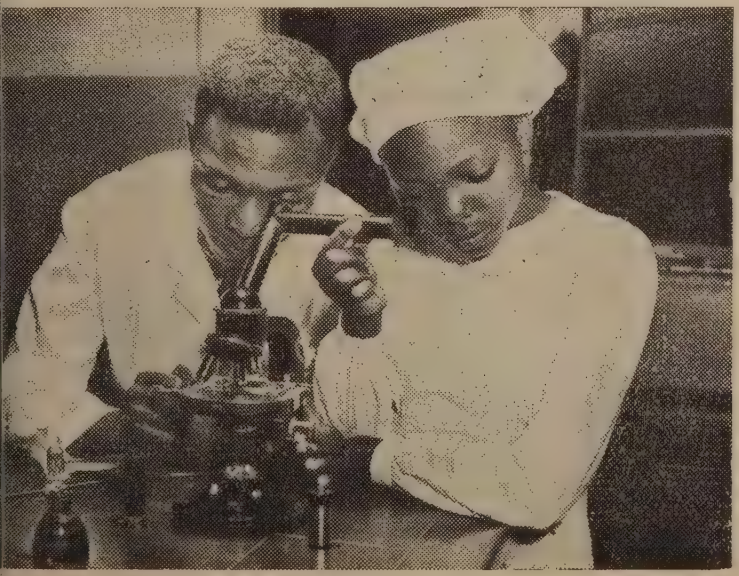
and buggy days" when the tension and the pressure of the work seemed less and one did not watch the clock so closely to keep to schedule. But to go back to those days would mean also going back to losing most of our pneumonia cases (who would wait until the last minute to come in) because we had no penicillin; treating disentary cases with no chloromycetin resulting in the case being long and drawn out leaving the patient weak, thin, and haggard; being unable to get blood donors because of lack of willingness and understanding on the part of the Congolese (this is still plenty difficult); having no blood expanders for those in shock, no x-ray for setting a broken leg, no modern contraptions to keep it in place after it is set. We would also have large lazarets for our sleeping-sickness patients (this disease is rarely found these days in the Lower Congo) as well as many patients with tropical ulcers to dress. It would also mean that we would have no graduate nurses to do a large part of the follow-up work and the treatments. NO, NO, we would not want to go back to practicing medicine 25 years ago.



Medical Mission work depends a great deal on where one is and the newness of the station. The contrasts we would draw between "then ..... and now" would be more sharp because of our present privilege of working in one of the more modern protestant hospitals in the Congo today. Instead of patients coming in by hammocks and pickaback, they come by train, truck, and taxi; but let me hasten to say lest you have a wrong impression that we still operate by flashlight when the motor fails us!

One should not fail to recognize the fact that while some diseases are on the wane, others, especially tuberculosis, are on the increase. As the diet and mode of living for the Congolese changes, so also do the medical statistics take on a new face. Appendicitis and gall bladder disturbances are good examples of this.

The large number of dispensaries now existing in the rural areas staffed by graduate nurses not only speaks of the progress in education for the Africans, the improved health of the average villager, but also of the gradual victory of medicine over the old



witch doctor. Many of the young folks who have grown up in Christian homes have never seen a witch doctor work. Baby clinics and prenatal clinics have helped markedly in the reduction of the infant mortality rate and the death rate of the mothers in childbirth. Wherever Christ is preached the leprosy patient is not forgotten and so the work amongst these people has marched with the times. In this area many of those previously isolated have now been sent back to their villages as non-infectious cases. Those remaining are being kept under treatment with a rehabilitation program.

What a difference to have trained nurses! How well we remember setting the alarm for every two hours during the night to check on the serious patients. Now trusted nurses can watch blood pressures, pulse, etc. and call when necessary. When will we have Congolese doctors? It is in the future. Often we look at the children of our nurses and wonder which of them will have the opportunity to attend such a school.

However much the physical aspects of the medical work has changed, the individual need of a living Savior has remained the same. Presentation of Christ as personal Savior whether in personal work or in group meetings has the same convicting power that it had in Paul's day. The increase in patients has augmented the opportunities ..... and the responsibilities. It is not often that we in the medical work have the privilege of witnessing the baptism of people who have confessed Christ while in the hospital; few patients stay that long. The general rule is that they go back to their villages where the follow-up work is done by the pastors. However, this past year we did have this blessing. Two women, both helpers of patients, were baptized here at Kimpese before they returned to their villages. One was the mother of a child with Pott's disease who was with us about a year. She made profession of Christ soon after coming and was very faithful about attending the weekly catechism classes, this being a church rule for all candidates for baptism.

As we try to peer into the future we trust that with God's help, the prayers of friends, and the work of consecrated Africans and missionaries, even greater progress will be made in the coming 25 years than has been done in the past.

# *THE SAME GOOD NEWS*

HELEN ROBBINS

MANY years ago the Good News of Jesus Christ came to the village of Makengo nestled in a valley surrounded by beautiful hills. It came overland from Sona Bata. The village then was untouched by civilization; commerce and employment by the white man was not known; books, modern medicine, cloth other than that made of raffia had been heard of but not used. The area was sufficient unto itself as far as its demands were concerned. But Christ touched the hearts of the people. The old chief was interested and asked for and received a teacher for his people. Many of the villagers abandoned their fetishes, repudiated the witch doctor, rejected polygamy. They heard gladly the Word of God and the life of the village changed. Great joy was in the village as the little church grew and prospered. A supervising pastor was placed in the area.

Then Satan came to destroy the church. The pastor fell into temptation and left. The inadequately trained teachers became discouraged and some of the Christians lost their hold. Isolated in the hills the village had formerly been reached by missionaries with carriers. Now that carriers were no longer available the village was even more isolated as far as visitors from without were concerned. We might say that the church died out; but no, there was left a spark of life and the Spirit of God did not leave. Two church members kept the faith, one man and one woman; a few who had been converts kept the spark of faith in their hearts. But their knowledge was very limited. How can an illiterate church without a leader be guided in the Christian life!

Years passed. Other areas received government dispensaries and small trading centers. Government officials, traders and missionaries visited them by car. Agricultural projects were promoted. But in its isolation Makengo had none of these. Only several times daily the drone of airplane motors passing overhead could be heard. But the life of the village did change. If outsiders did not come, the men of Makengo could get out by foot. A few months work at Léopoldville and a young man could come

home with enough riches for the bride price and fine clothes for himself and his bride. The next trip might bring him perhaps a bicycle, or possibly a sewing machine and clothes for the family — all but the baby who needs no clothes. One enterprising man who worked on construction in the big city brought home somehow several sacks of cement. In the midst of the thatch huts he is beginning to construct himself a little cement block dwelling.

The old chief had died and the present Chief Makengo and his people were not satisfied. With crude hand tools he had the men of the village cut a road through eleven miles of grassland to meet the official road. The government was pleased and opened a dispensary in the village and built a house for visiting white people. This happened just a few months ago.

The chief asked for a Christian school. "Build a school house," said the missionary, "and a house for the teacher and we will furnish the teacher for your school." Nothing daunted, the neat thatch school building for thirty pupils was made ready, and the house for the monitor. School was opened in May of this year. Services were held regularly. Classes for inquirers were held. The missionary visited the village.

The great day came when the missionary and his wife came to stay eight days in the village. They brought with them the first books in the Kiyaka language, the language of the people of Makengo.

Many of the men had been called away to work on a road, but enthusiasm was great in the village. Men, women and teen-agers poured over books, helping each other, putting forth every effort to master the rudiments. This is not easy for a people who have developed no reading readiness derived from pictures, signs, etc. The book held upside down, what's the difference! Letters that represent not only sounds, but objects! What a revelation!

Each morning for three hours the groups gathered in the shade of the palm grove in the center of the village. What elation each time a learner was promoted from one group to the next! How desperately the hopeless ones kept on trying — but there were only two or three of those, old folks whose eyes were dim. Here is a young mother trying to keep her baby occupied at her breast while she reads. Holding a diaperless baby frequently

causes other complications, but these are taken care of quite casually. Nothing must hinder the pursuance of knowledge. The report was that the village was getting hungry, for the women didn't want to take the time to go to the gardens for food. The chief had laid down his ultimatum. "You young girls," he said, "if any of you don't learn to read you will be given in marriage to old men!" At the end of the period forty received certificates to indicate their progress.

But still greater joy was there over the results of the meetings held morning and evening in the chief's compound, followed up by

group and individual contacts during the afternoons. It was not a new message; it was the same message of repentance and salvation they heard when Peter MacDairmid first tramped the unknown trail to the village years ago, when he first won the hearts of the people as they saw him share his lunch with a colored man. There was a warmth of reception among the older people of a message they knew was good. Many accepted Christ and are determinedly preparing for baptism.

Seven were baptized. Children were dedicated to the Lord; in one family five at once. Tribal marriages of those who had since become Christian were given a Christian blessing, this giving them recognition as Christian marriages by both church and government. A church committee was formed. A weekly women's meeting was organized by women just beginning to read. Eight days full of great events were typified in the family and home of one young couple, Mulandu George and Nsimba Anne. They were both baptized. Their marriage was given Christian sanction. Their two children were dedicated and blessed. They both learned to read!

Materials are being gathered to build a church nearby the school house. Once again there is a living church at Makengo, the same Christ amid different conditions bringing back to the village the same power and joy of salvation and fellowship with Him that they had once had and lost.

# *WE FOUND IT THUS....*

JAMES AND JUNE CLARK

SURELY the word welcome is a choice one in any language. Before and since our arrival in the Congo we have received a goodly number of letters of welcome from missionaries already here. We would like to share the contents of one of these letters. Its message is well expressed and is very meaningful.

> "To you and your little one, a hearty welcome to this land, our fellowship and His service. May the Lord bless you with health for long years, and a joyous ministry witnessing that souls may be saved and the Church prepared for the Lord's return. You will be building on some foundations laid by others — we trust that you will find them secure. You will be laying other foundations upon which others yet to come may be privileged to build, may these be strong as you profit by the experience of your predecessors and add thereto as God directs in some new and perhaps more constructive ways. May your faith be joyous, bouyant, victorious. When disappointments cloud your skies, look for the rainbows—our God never fails us, only tests that we may lean more heavily upon Him."

Our sense of feeling wanted has also been greatly enhanced by the friendly greetings in person of missionaries since our arrival here. Perhaps our most treasured first impression in the Congo has been the cordial reception that we have received from the Congolese themselves. When we came onto the campus of the Sona Bata station we stopped to listen to the lovely singing of a large choir of school children. This was their way of extending a welcome to us. You may be sure that this angelic music warmed our hearts in a very special manner.

Before coming to the Congo, we had heard much concerning the need for more active native leadership. Much had been said in our mission classes about the development of the indigenous church. We were led to believe that the Congolese had not assumed a great part of the leadership in schools, hospitals and

churches. Much to our surprise we found the situation here at Sona Bata much different than perhaps we had expected. The first Sunday we attended a well organized church with a pastor, assistant pastor, song leader, deacons and deaconesses — all of whom were Congolese. At the same time we were amazed to find such capable and well trained men in responsible positions in the school and medical work. The station council here at Sona Bata is now composed of African representatives from each branch of our work who meet with the missionaries to discuss plans and problems. There are more Congolese than missionaries on this committee. Even though these may be more recent developments, we were thrilled to know that through the years our missionaries had helped to develop these men and women until they are now capable of assuming places of responsibility. These are some of the strong foundations on which we can build and continue to strengthen in years to come. We believe that our first duty as missionaries is to bring people — men, women, boys and girls — to a knowledge of Christ as Saviour and then to nurture and develop this new faith until it flourishes into a life of devoted Christian service.

In addition to the pastors, teachers and nurses, we have also encountered many other skilled laborers in the service of the mission. For instance there is the head carpenter, mechanic, person responsible for lights and water, the chauffeur and other men who know their jobs and do them well. To each of these various individuals we are grateful because they make life on the mission station run more smoothly. We do not want to give the impression that we missionaries are not working. The truth is the missionaries are working with the Congolese as a team — the missionary doing his tasks and the Congolese assuming his part of the load.

In the past the picture of the composition of a mission station was a bit hazy in our minds. Now through first hand observation that picture has become clear for us. To begin with a mission station may include a rather large tract of land. At Sona Bata there are 165 hectares (a hectare is equal approximately to two and a half acres). A mission station must usually make some provisions for its water system and electric power. Sona Bata has a disel engine that turns the generator for our electricity which is made

available from six to ten PM each day. We have at Sona Bata five houses in which missionary personnel live. We have a nice church and some school buildings with some other much needed ones under construction. Our hospital has been operated for the past several months by a nurse. We expect the arrival of a doctor next April. In addition to these buildings and utilities a mission station usually has such things as a carpenter shop, a garage and storerooms. A mission station is a very beautiful and interesting place. The part where the buildings are located reminds us very much of the general appearance of a typical college campus in the States. From the station missionaries make trips to the more isolated churches, schools and dispenseries with supplies and to help with and supervise the work being done in these places by the African Christian leaders. The pupils who come to the station schools produce most of their food in their garden plots located on the mission land. At Sona Bata there are now approximately 600 pupils and approximately 1500 pupils in the Sona Bata regional schools. In our station church each morning at 6 AM we have a devotional service of singing, Bible reading and prayer. It is a thrilling experience to witness all of these intelligent boys and girls assemble in the house of the Lord at this early morning hour. The value of our schools in reaching the Congo youth for Christ cannot be over-emphasized.

To us it is a real art that the Congo women are able to so gracefully carry loads on their heads sometimes weighing as much as seventy-five pounds. They doubtless are conditioned and trained for this feat from early girlhood. This practice tends to develop a very graceful and poised walking posture.

Soon after our arrival at Sona Bata, Roland Metzger said to me, "James, would you like to go with me to a Matonda service?" Of course I was happy for this chance to gain further insight into the work of an evangelistic missionary. Matonda comes from the Kikongo verb, tonda, and is translated to be thankful. This service of thanks was attended by members of four church congregations and was held ninety kilometers (about fifty-six miles) from Sona Bata. This meeting began on Friday evening and ended on Sunday afternoon. We calculated that at least a thousand persons were present for the Sunday morning service of worship. Of all

the interesting aspects that I observed during this weekend the one that impressed me the most was perhaps the rather stiff oral examinations that were given to those desiring baptism and church membership. Of those examined forty-eight were considered ready for this important step. At the time scheduled for this service, these candidates for baptism were formed into a single file and other members of the congregation joined in the rear of this procession as we walked two miles on a hot Saturday afternoon to a small river where an African pastor baptised these new Christians. This was indeed an inspiring sight for a newly arrived missionary to witness.

Thus we have written briefly on several topics as we have found them during our first few weeks in the Congo. We look forward to other observations as we do our best to become useful missionaries.

## *CONGO SAFARI*

RUSSEL ORR

THE opportunity which was mine in visiting the Congo Mission is one for which I shall always be most grateful. I shall never be the same again, and everything takes on a different hue in the light of those days with the missionaries and fellow Christians there, days which had been preceded by similar experiences in Japan, Burma, and Assam.

Before drawing any conclusions, let me outline briefly the events of those days. Arriving in Leopoldville on July 29 following the meetings of the Baptist World Alliance in London, I looked with wide-open eyes at that modern city and spent a delightful evening with the Armstrongs, the Weavers, the Arley Browns and Phyllis Benner, having dinner at the Weavers and then visiting the native market.

On to Kikwit the next morning by plane and then a long, bumpy, dusty ride to Vanga. The Jumps and the Riddles were delightful traveling companions and hosts as was true of every missionary whom I met all along the way and whom I shall not attempt to name individually.

From Saturday until early Tuesday in the Vanga area; then to Kikongo for overnight; on to Boko with dust seeping in through every slightest opening in the car; and then, aroused by the smashing of the mirror blown from the window in the guest house at 3 a.m., a long ride from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m. with Roland Metzger and two Africans all the way to Sona Bata. There I enjoyed two restful nights in the Metzger home (those are fine boys, Paul and Charles Metzger) and a good day at Sona Bata including a delightful birthday dinner at Eva Shepard's recognizing Mrs. Orr in absentia and Roland Metzger. The African guest seemed especially disturbed to hear about how I had seen homeless people sleeping on the streets in Calcutta.

On Saturday I went from Sona Bata to Kimpese by train and was greatly impressed, and favorably, by the work there both in school and hospital. After a pleasant Sunday there, speaking at the church service in the morning and meeting with the missionaries at the Tuttle home in the evening, and watching an operation Monday forenoon, I rode with Dr. and Mrs. Tuttle in the afternoon to Banza Manteke. There followed the enriching days of the Mission Conference, four evenings and three full days, until taking off again for Leopoldville on Friday morning — two weeks of experience which gave me a greatly enlarged comprehension of the nature of the work, a deepened concern, and some realization of the opportunities and problems on every hand. In some ways the two words, opportunity and problem, are synonymous.

The most memorable experience was the service of baptism at Modiambo on July 31 when we stood for nearly an hour observing while 368 candidates came down the river bank in six lines going out six at a time to the six pastors standing waist deep in the water. The sound of the familiar hymn, *O Happy Day*, lifted on the voices of the throng on either side of the river, the crowded church service following and the privilege of sharing with the missionaries in extending the right hand of Christian fellowship to each of the 368 is something not quickly forgotten. The whole matter took on added significance when I learned that the requirements for baptism involved so much.

Other delightful experiences and observations included the gatherings in the missionary homes at Vanga where we joined in

song and prayer and listened to Dr. Osterholm as he sang for us in his strong, fine voice; the excellent birthday dinner for Janet Boone at the home of the Lewis Browns' in Kikongo and the singing of the students from the Bible School, especially as the Rev. Livingstone Lomas, another visitor from the States, took over and led the songs often forgetting the language barrier; the contrast between the rather poor, thatched building for maternity patients at Boko and the fine new building which was under construction and which showed the influence of "Let's go, Scotty"; the pastors' wives in school at Kimpese learning the rudiments of reading and writing in order to be more helpful to their husbands; the excellent hospital at Kimpese where I watched Dr. Tuttle as he performed a delicate operation with great patience and skill.

These experiences were all gathered up in the pleasant days of the Mission Conference at Banza Manteke.

One thing which I have been able to say again and again since coming home and to say with confidence is that we can be genuinely proud of our missionaries. These men and women speak with becoming modesty about their work when they visit our churches at home, but my report of them is that there are not finer, more dedicated, more wholesome and genuine Christians anywhere than these American Baptist missionaries. They ought to have, it seemed to me, a larger measure of administrative freedom in the planning of the program and in the spending of funds on the field and this impression has been conveyed to the Board and the Secretaries at home. The thoughtful planning, the excellent field reports, the esprit de corps and high morale of the entire group impressed me.

Going to Africa from Japan, Burma and India, I was conscious of the similarity of the problems, despite many differences. The close-knit family society and the courage required of an individual to step out as a Christian is different from the condition at home. It seemed to me that the missionary is often pressed beyond measure by the many waiting opportunities which cannot be seized for lack of time and strength. Problems abound, but they are being faced with courage and hope.

In four months at home I have attempted to tell something of the story more than 80 times and my own reaction is like that of

the fine layman who said, after hearing the story and seeing the pictures, "For years I have been giving to missions, but I had no idea of anything like that." Or, like the pastor who said to a new member of the church, following the presentation, "You did not know, did you, that you were becoming a part of a great enterprise like that?"

It would be difficult for me to write further in any attempt to evaluate these impressions, but I most certainly am convinced that the growing edge in the life of our times is in these lands which are rising in their strength. The direction they take in the next few years will have a profound effect upon our children and their children's children. Whether that way shall be Christ's way is being determined in a considerable measure by the faithful witness of American Baptist missionaries who deserve increased support and who need to be joined by others who will share the burden with them. To that end we pledge to them our labor and our prayers.

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## *DRAMA IN THE BAYANZI HILLS*

NORMAN RIDDLE

DRAMA, like gold, is where you find it. Usually, however, we don't know where to look. The drama in our own lives becomes hidden under the grind of routine, and we are tempted to search elsewhere. The other fellow has all the action and romance. Many think that certainly the missionary, of all people, lives in a constant parade of exotic happenings and is therefore always brimming over with the thrill of life. It is true that missionaries live in strange and interesting surroundings; but the climate and these surroundings and incidents themselves form a sort of routine, and one must be constantly on guard not to miss the drama that comes each day. A trip into the district with Chet Jump brought home to me again the thrill of our work here in Congo. What happened there is only a part of the drama that unrolls all over our Vanga field, on our other Congo stations, and on our other mission fields throughout the world.

## *SETTING*

The church post NGUNU is situated in the heart of the Bayanzi Hills to the East of Vanga across the river Kwilu. It takes about 3 1/2 hours to reach it by car from Vanga, over sandy roads which allow top speeds of only 30 or 40 miles an hour. The surrounding country is rather wild looking, and the post itself sits on the very top of one of the highest hills. It isn't an especially large post since it has been located there rather recently. There is no church as yet only a thatch covered shed. The people have begun to build with brick and cement like most of the other Vanga posts are doing. The foundation and beginnings of the walls dominate the center of the area. To one side are the mud and thatch class rooms, and all round the edge the houses of mud and thatch and bamboo for the pastors, missionary, and students in the regional school. This post serves 10 villages and has a total church membership of 800. The occasion of our coming was the annual visit to examine candidates for baptism, and this is the source of our drama.

## Act I

Act One is concerned with the vital work of examining the candidates. The first scene opens at two o'clock Friday afternoon. Under the shade of a palm-frond arbor sit Chet Jump; my wife, Von; the pastor, the candidate, and myself. The first question comes in *Kihungana*, "What are the ten commandments?" The candidate shifts uneasily and glances appealingly to the pastor who puts the question in *Kiyanzi*. Then slowly at first but with gathering confidence the words so carefully and painstakingly learned during the long months past come tumbling forth. There are more questions. "What is evil?" "Why are all men under condemnation of death?" "Why do you want to be saved?" "How is one saved?" The candidates come in a steady stream. Now it is a young girl who hasn't been to school, but has learned to read anyway. Now it is an old man, full of years, but making a great effort to learn more about the Jesus Way. Now it is a young man in his twenties answering with a surprising and refreshing originality. And so it goes. A successful candidate rises and with quick step and hand held high marches happily across the compound. But all do not succeed. This one is confused about baptism and thinks

that his sins are washed away by the water. That one hasn't tried to learn to read. Another one is generally confused. Still another has put away his wife for not working. These leave with slow step and bowed head, and sometimes tears. The hours pass and the scene closes as the sun turns into a glowing red ball in the West.

### *SCENE II*

Between scenes we eat, sleep, and conduct 6:00 A.M. morning chapel. Then its breakfast and Scene II begins. This time Chet is alone under the arbor. Another pastor sits with him and the candidates. I am in the shade of the garage with the Ngunu pastor, examining some pupils from another school. The questions, now in *Kikongo*, are more difficult and farther from the Catechism. "What is the church?" "What great task did Jesus leave for it to do?" "How would you tell someone else to be saved?" "How do we show we are born again?" These students can read well and have Bible training every day. It is thrilling to hear them express their faith each in his own way. We long to spend more time with those who are confused, but there is always the press of numbers. The sun is once more a glowing ball in the West when Scene II closes. A sense of deep satisfaction fills the heart.

## Act II

The second act of our drama is the testimony meeting in the mud and thatched shelter for the successful candidates. It is still early morning and a chilling wind blows at our backs. Chet calls the roll and each one stands to give a short expression of faith. "Once I was blind, now I see." "The Lord is My Shepherd." "The Lord is my Strengthener." "Once I had two masters, now I have One." "Once I was a goat, now I am a sheep." The candidates are a little self conscious, a little breathless. The last one speaks, and we prepare for act three.

## Act III

We are standing beside a dammed up stream in a little valley. We have come down a sandy trail from the post and are now gathered at the water's edge. The candidates line up in three lines.

The three pastors wade out cautiously into the flowing water. One raises his hand and the crowd bows in prayer. Now the candidates come forward in wellworn clothes. One pastor questions, "The Son of God Himself came to this earth to suffer and die for you. Are you willing to suffer for Him?" There is a muted reply in the affirmative. "Because of your faith in Christ I now baptise you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." The candidates are put under the water then leave to be replaced by others, as the audience sings a line of some familiar hymn. Finally the last one leaves the water, another pastor prays, and we slowly climb the hill to take part in the Finale.

## Act IV

We are once more in the shelter. The communion table is spread. Before us are the gayly dressed candidates beaming with happiness. None of them has worked less than a year for this moment, and many for several. The opening hymn is spiritedly sung. Prayer is offered. Then Chet rises to preach. He speaks of Demas who forsook the Way, of Diotrephes who remained but loved the preeminence, and finally of Demitrius of whom was given a good report. He challenged them to be as Demitrius. The pastor sums up his sermon in *Kiyanzi* and reads the names of those put on discipline during the year. One failed to give regularly, another had marital trouble. Now it is time for communion. The universal appeal of the Gospel comes home anew as white and black sit down together. There remain but the giving of the right hand of fellowship and the church membership cards before the final act is over. Sixty-eight candidates, sixty-eight handshakes, sixty-eight cards. One beaming old gentleman hurries down the aisle and begins pumping our hands enthusiastically. He has to be reminded of the outstretched card. The last card is given, the last hand shaken and we leave for our waiting Carry-all with hearts full of the holy excitement which comes to all who labor with God to win others.

Here is the reason for the separation from loved ones, the long months of language study, the lack of the luxuries of home. The dullness of the routine of teaching classes, of keeping accounts, of doing the numberless small jobs that crowd the missionary's

day all seem secondary now. This is the drama of the Bayanzi hills and you, too, may share in it as you win men and women to Christ wherever you are.

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## *MISSIONARY "DR. ANTHONY"*

VIOLA L. SMITH

A FEW weeks ago a letter came from one of our former pupils now working in the bank at Léopoldville, asking that I obtain permission for him to return home to marry a girl who is now a pupil in the boarding school here. I had a chat with the girl and she quite frankly stated that she did not want to marry him; she had never seen him and preferred to finish school before marrying anyone. I wrote the sad news to him and received the following reply:

To Mama Smith:

First of all, good health and peace in our Lord Jesus. I have seen the news written in your letter. I have seen them well, but Mama, if the girl does not love me simply because she has not seen me, then how about me? Have I ever seen her? Yet I love her! Here is the situation: My father has written: "My son, come and get your girl. I have paid all the necessary bride price, all that is left is to marry her." So I have prepared my heart to come and marry her on the 30th of October. Now you say that she has told you that she does not want to marry me? Why? Just because she doesn't know me!

Mama, can't you write a letter to the director of the bank, who is my employer, asking him to give me a vacation to go and see the girl, and to let the girl see what I am like? Right now she doesn't want me, but what about the money that has been paid? And I have been planning to send some money to her father and her brothers. Who will pay it all back? Give me an answer and I'll go find myself another girl. But Mama, I see much shame and sorrow.

Thanks be to the Lord God; I am sendingyou greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Simon

Immediately following receipt of this letter I received a visit from the boy's father who asked that the girl be interviewed in his presence. At that time she admitted that she had received a dress and had worn it, which was an indication that at one time she was interested in having the negotiations go forward. She still claims she is not interested in the young man, but she allowed herself to be persuaded by his father to at least look at him if I should succeed in obtaining permission for him to come home to press his suit.

The letter has been written and permission obtained for him to return home in January. Will he win the girl? At least in this "new day" in Congo he will have to try to "win" her, for Congo's young women are becoming educated and are learning to choose their life partners.

## *off the record . . .*

We usually try to have some theme or point of emphasis for the Congo News Letter and this time it's the *unchanging* sameness of God who paradoxically can meet and is the answer to the *ever changing* problems of the world — and our "world" of Congo Belge in particular. *Janet Boone*, in her poem on page 3, and *Virginia Nickerson*, in her article on page 4, nicely introduce the theme. Janet, with husband Edwin, is working with the Bible Institute at Kikongo and Virginia is the nurse (first term) at Banza Manteke ..... Léopoldville is the supreme example of the hustle and bustle of modern Congo with a whole new set of needs but *Phyllis Benner*, who for years was our only full time worker there, tells in "Which Way — Léo?" how only the Christians seem to be sanely finding their way through the maze of complex problems. The COVER PICTURE gives you a glimpse of the modern Léopoldville adaptation of that ancient and honored African institution, market day. It's such a necessary part of African life that many places were named for the day when market was held there. Imagine having an address like "Tuesday Market" ..... In "The Same Good News", *Helen Robbins* tells of Boko, our new-

est station, where she and husband, Bill, face most of the problems and primitive contitions that had to be met by the pioneer missionaries; yet even there economic and other changes have their effect. ..... *Jeannette Tuttle*, nurse and wife of Dr. Glen Tuttle (now on a month's trip to India for a medical conference), has the privilege of working in one of the most modern hospitals in the Congo. In "Medical Work Then .. and Now" she discusses the nostalgic feeling of some missionaries that it would be nice to go back to the "good old days" of leisurely pace but comes to the conclusion that we wouldn't really want to even if we could.

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll enjoy the first impressions of a new educational missionary couple, southerners *June* and *James Clark* and of a distinguished visitor, *Dr. Russel Orr*, Baptist executive secretary from Illinois. ..... *Viola Smith* as a "Missionary Dr. Anthony" demonstrates that missionary work isn't always just what you'd think. Viola with agriculturist husband, Smithy, is finishing the last of many terms, most of them spent at Kikongo. ..... *Norman Riddle*, first termer from Vanga, reminds us of the eternal drama in the simple working out of the Gospel story

The *Congo News Letter* is of course written to acquaint American Baptists at home with the product of their missionary giving and praying. We would like to have suggestions as to what kind of articles and "news" are the most valuable and interesting to you. . . . what would you like to know about? Let us hear from you.

— R. U.

# *NEWS ITEMS FROM THE BIG CITY*

* We now have another trained nurse for our Léopoldville dispensary. Tata Bidi arrived November the 17th, and received a royal welcome from everyone, but especially our overworked nurse, Mama Mattie. Now we can expand some more.

* The Evangelistic committee met here the first of November. It was good fun and very stimulating to have the missionary church leaders here.

* Annis Ford came on an unplanned "flying" visit during the first two weeks of November. It wasn't unexpected, for we radioed out asking her to come. School disputes and troubles, while unneeded and distinctly unwanted, had at least that good result that it brought her home again.

* The Léopoldville church is launching a campaign for building a new church. The plans aren't fully completed yet, but the school has started collecting money, and a few hardy souls have already given a few gifts. A general meeting is called for the 27th of November, when the push will begin. The church building now in use has long been too small for our needs. It is a big task, and we need lots of help and prayers.

* The teaching of adult classes in reading is our major miracle here. Every conversation ends up there. Over twenty women have already finished the first book, and there are long lists of those waiting, who cannot understand why they can't enter class right off.

* LATE FLASH: At long last we are really to build our school! Everything is finally O.K.ed by the government; the contract signed and we start building before January 1st 1956. We wonder if we'll know how to act in a real school instead of temporarily partitioned off places, à la Sunday School, in the main sanctuary of the church.

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*See Directory Supplement — p. 31*